

Marriage

Softas-Nall

Reasons for Marriage

- Emotional Security: an enduring, close emotional relationship
- Companionship: loving and being loved
- Desire to be a parent

“Wrong” Reasons

- Less likely to have an enduring marriage:
- Physical Attractiveness
- Economic Security
- Pressure from others
- Pregnancy
- Escape, rebellion, rebound

Family Life Cycle & Marriage

- 1. Beginning Phase: Most report greatest satisfaction with this stage.
- Searching for some way to discover the person they married, rather than someone they dated
- Identity bargaining and adjustment idealized expectations
- Loss of independence
- New friends and relatives. Wife has more of a burden.

Child Rearing Phase

- Marital satisfaction declines, rises again after children leave home.
- Parenting brings great joy who requires effort, time, responsibility, and resources.
- Two paycheck parents of young ones worry about the child watched by someone else
- Stress by demands of commuting, job insecurity, low pay and child care demands. Also, home, school and after school responsibilities.

- Domestic responsibilities:
- Woman still do the most household and childcare work.
- Changes in their sex life still married partners 88% report physical pleasure and emotional satisfaction compared with single people.

Middle Age Phase

- About when last child leaves home
- Empty Nest
- “Boomerang” adult children return
- Without children at home marital relationship improves. (may vary by culture, gender)

Aging Phase

- Most couples relax and enjoy each other
– (Williams et al, 2009)

Working Families

5/4/2009

- Between 1970 and 2002 the % of married women with children under the age of 6 who were in the labor force went from 30% to 63%.
- In 2002 over 71% of mothers with children under age 18 were in the workforce!
- 5.6% of married couples have a husband who doesn't work and a wife who does.

- A quarter of working women work part time, compared with only 10% of working men, which lets them take care of children or elderly while still maintaining job skills.
- Women who work part time earn a median of \$1.15 for every dollar that their male counterparts make.
- When it comes to full time work, women early 76 cents on the dollar compared to men. (p. 415)

- U.S. Workers have the fewest vacation days in the industrialized world. (Averaging 10-14 paid days off a year compared to 25-30 days for citizens in many European countries.
- In the U.S. finances are cited most frequently by 34% as the top source of stress and jobs at 28% as the top source. (Total 62%)
- In most industrialized countries health, disability, retirement, sick leave, unemployment benefits and other forms of community welfare – aid to those in need – are largely programs of that state.

- In the U.S. (apart from social security and Medicaid) it is run largely through fringe benefits offered by employers.
- About 16.3% of employee compensation accounts for benefits (health insurance, retirement, vacations)
- Unfortunately when companies run into hard times benefits are trimmed.
- 16% are without health insurance. This % is higher for minorities.
- *Put vacation time from before here*

- In the 1990's information technology impacted leisure time and family.
- Fax machines, home computers, the internet, and email, pagers, cell phones, text messaging etc. became ways to extend work into off work time.

Income Wealth and Households

- In 2005 the median household income in the U.S. was \$42,326 with Asian (\$61,094) and non-Hispanic white households (\$50,784) above the median and Hispanic (\$37,967) and black households (30,858) below the median. (p.418)
- American men in their 30's now actually make less than their fathers did – a 12.5% drop
- In the U.S. the richest 10% own nearly 70% of the country's wealth and the top 1% owns 32% of the nation's wealth.

- About 45% of Americans identify themselves as being "middle class" In a six class model these are the figures:
- The Capitalist class, 1%. Incomes of \$1,000,000 plus; investors, heirs, top executives.
- The Upper Middle class, 15%. \$125,000 plus. Professionals, upper managers. They owe much of their success to education, must have college degrees and often post graduate degrees.

- The lower middle class, 34%. Income about \$60,000 lower management, craftspeople, semiprofessionals.
- The working class, 30%. Income about \$35,000. Factory workers, chemical workers, low paid sales people. Threatened by taxes and inflation.
- The working poor, 16%. Incomes of about \$17,000. Unskilled, low paying jobs such as house cleaners, day laborers and migrant workers. Often stipend or help such as food stamps. Often many are high school dropouts or illiterate. Major fear that they might become homeless.

- The underclass, 4%. Incomes of under \$10,000. Unskilled people who endure poverty and despair for years and even generations. Menial, low paying jobs. Need support from government and food stamps and non-profit food kitchens.
- Some of this depends on locality. San Francisco Bay area vs. other places where cost of living, commuting costs, housing etc., makes a difference.

- Today's parents confront the threat of school violence as they consider where their children will attend school. Incidents of serious violent crime such as robbery, rape, attack with a weapon is more than three times higher in schools characterized by high poverty levels than those with predominantly middle and upper income children.
- Urban children are more than twice as likely as suburban children to fear being attacked on the way to and from school.

- Parents worry for their kids and move to the suburbs by their fear of crime. Millions of parents of loving parents bought their way into a decent school district in a safe neighborhood whatever the cost.
- A growing number of stay-at-home mothers got jobs hoping to put their families into middle class neighborhoods.
- Today's mothers are no longer working to get ahead. Now they must work to keep up.
(Warner, Tyagi, 2009, Skolnick)

Emerging Adulthood

What is the difference between adolescence and emerging adulthood?
Why is it important to understand the difference?
What are the risks?

Emerging Adulthood

- In the 1950's the median age of marriage in the U.S. was just 20 for women, 22 for men.
- 2000: 25 for women, 27 for men.
- Why?

Why?

- Birth Control Pill
- Sexual retribution of the 1960's & 1970's created the new mentality that young people no longer had to be married to have a regular sexual relationship.
- Increase in years to pursue higher education
- Profound changes in the meaning and value young people give to become an adult and entering the adult roles of spouse and parent.

- For young women of the 21st century reality is different. 56% of undergraduates in U.S. colleges and universities are women.
- Occupational possibilities for women are unlimited. Women make the most of their emerging adult years before they enter marriage and parenthood.

Main Features of Emerging Adulthood

- Preceded by adulthood and followed by young adulthood

1. Age of Identity
 - Explorations in love and work
 - By becoming involved with different people, emerging adults learn about the qualities that are most important to them in another person, both in what attracts them, and what is annoying. They learn what others find attractive in them and what is annoying.

Age of Identity cont.

- Work experiences become more focused than adolescence to lay the groundwork for adult occupation. "What kind of work am I good at? What kind of work would be satisfying?"
- Failures and disappointments in love and work are illuminating for self-understanding.
- Variety of romantic experiences and trying out unusual educational and work possibilities and traveling.

Age of Instability

- Shifting choices in love and work make emerging adulthood are intense and also exceptionally unstable one.
- They know they are supposed to have a plan with a capital "P", from adolescence to adulthood, which is subject to numerous revision (changes in major, partners, residence, roommates, jobs) Exploration and instability go hand in hand.

The Self-Focused Age

- During emerging adolescence there are few tides that entail daily obligations and commitments to others.
- It is normal, health and temporary to be self-focused at this stage
- "Go to college? Work full-time? Combine the two? Switch roommates? Break up with girlfriend / boyfriend?"

The age of Feeling In-Between

- Neither adolescent nor adult on the way to adulthood but not there yet.
- Top 3 criteria for adulthood:
 - 1. Accept Responsibility for self
 - 2. Make independent decisions
 - 3. Become financially independent

The Age of Possibilities

- Age of high hopes and great expectations
- Have left Family of Origin but not yet committed to a new network of relationships and obligations.
- An unparalleled opportunity to transform their lives. For those who have come from troubled families this is their chance to try to work on parts of themselves that have become twisted to become the kind of person they wish to be. More than any other period presents the possibility of change regardless of their family background.

Poverty

Source: NSF

- About 37 million people (Census Bureau 2006) live at or below the poverty level, about 13% of the population.
- One in six children lives in poverty
- 14% of females, 11% of males
- For females, 29% maintained by single women
- 13% by single men
- Long term poverty (10 years or more) none among whites (less than 1%) common among African American children (29% for ten yrs or more)

Consequences of Poverty

- Greater exposure to environmental toxins
- High fat, high salt, low vegetable, fruit diets due to the shrinking number of good affordable supermarkets in inner city neighborhoods and affordability of fast food restaurants.
- Responses to stress of unemployment such as gambling and alcohol use.

Consequences Continued

- Increases in mortality rate, homicides, imprisonment, first admission to mental hospitals, and increase in infant mortality.
- At least twice as likely to be hospitalized for complications due to lack of early treatment and regular care.

Crisis and Disasters (p.453-458)

Stressors

- Predictable stressors of the family life cycle
- Newly weds, stresses with children, empty nest or not, aging: health and financial worries.

- Unpredictable stressors:
- Unemployment and underemployment
- Unemployed workers (temporarily or permanently dismissed or fired. (i.e. absenteeism)
- Discouraged workers – have given up
- Underemployed workers - below their levels of qualification.

Stresses

- In family conflicts, children are affected.
- Depression, alcoholism, divorce, suicide, domestic violence, homicide all associated when unemployment more than a year.

Roles Change

- Couple can come closer
- Men and self-identity
- Women work and helpful men, helpful husband

Infidelity: Sexual and Emotional Unfaithfulness

- Issues of Trust
- Internet Sex
- Emotional Affairs

Drug & Alcohol Use

- Impact on Children
- Show more fear, insecurity and anxiety

Mental Disorders

- Women twice as likely to experience depression.
- 10% of U.S. suffers from depression & bipolar.
- Highest rate in most nations
- Eating disorders

Physical Disability and Illness

- May be acute or chronic or recurring
- Severe psychological stress for the caregiver (i.e. 67% of caregivers of cancer patients, 64% for Alzheimer's)
- Support of Counselor, especially certified rehab counselor well advised

Death

- Death of a Parent
 - Loss of role as a child
 - Sibling relationships change
- Death of a Spouse
 - Women outlive men
 - Grief, loneliness, depression, financial hardship, shattering of identity as a spouse

Death Continued

- Death of a Child
 - Most severe kind of loss
 - Miscarriage (15% of all pregnancies) or still birth
 - Infant death – guilt, sadness (SIDS)
 - Loss of an Older Child
 - War, Accidents, suicide, illness
 - Intense grief, guilt, anger
- William B., Sawyer, S. & Wahlstrom, C. (2009).
Marriages, Families, and Intimate Relationships.
Boston & Pearson*